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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 001215

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [BM](#) [ASSK](#)

SUBJECT: ALATAS VISIT TO BURMA: "I DON'T WANT TO IMPOSE"

REF: A. RANGOON 1159

[B](#). RANGOON 1187

[C](#). JAKARTA 9435

Classified By: COM Carmen Martinez for Reasons 1.5 (B,D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: He came, he saw, he left. Indonesian special envoy Ali Alitas made a four-day visit September 21-24 to deliver personal messages to the SPDC from President Megawati. In his own words, he did not want to "impose" on the regime with regard to ASSK and accepted at face value the SPDC's claim that the democracy leader was not medically cleared to receive visitors (a claim contradicted by ASSK's personal physician, ref b). According to the Indonesian Ambassador here, Indonesia does not want "extraneous issues" (referring to the detention of ASSK) to affect the agenda at the upcoming ASEAN summit in Bali, which will focus on less controversial themes. By all accounts, the Alatas visit may lead the SPDC to believe that they will not be called to task in Bali for their recent misdeeds. End summary.

Alatas Visit: His Own Take

[1](#)2. (C) On September 24, Indonesian special envoy Ali Alatas gave a press briefing on his four-day visit to Burma, just prior to his return to Jakarta. According to the British DCM here, who was allowed to attend the briefing, Alatas insisted that he came to Burma as a special envoy of President Megawati, not as a representative of ASEAN (note: his point was foreshadowed by the GOB, per ref A. end note.) Alatas downplayed his visit and offered that the SPDC is "carefully and positively" considering ASSK's detention, which the regime described as "temporary and for her own protection." Alatas concluded he was "satisfied" with his visit, but said that it would be for others to judge the success of his brief stay. After Alatas told the press that he did not see ASSK because the GOB had informed him she did not have "medical clearance" for a personal visit, our British colleague took the envoy aside and told him that ASSK's physician had declared her medically fit to receive guests. Alatas replied that he didn't want to "impose" on the authorities with regard to with ASSK.

The Indonesian Embassy Version

[1](#)3. (C) On September 25, Indonesian Ambassador-designate Wyoso Prodjowarsito gave a one-hour briefing to the diplomatic corps on the Alatas visit. (Note: The Indonesian Ambassador has been in Rangoon for only one month and has not yet presented credentials. End note). Joining the COM were Ambassadors and/or Charges from the UK, Italy, Korea, Germany, France, Australia, and Japan. A junior diplomat from China and Leon de Reidmatten, local liaison for U.N. Special Envoy Razali, also attended.

[1](#)4. (C) According to Prodjowarsito, Alatas met on Monday September 22 for one hour with Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and on Tuesday September 22 for 45 minutes with SPDC Chairman Senior General Than Shwe. Participants in the latter session included Khin Nyunt, SPDC Vice Chairman General Maung Aye, SPDC Secretary 1, Secretary 2, and "many other officials." Alatas' only other official meeting was dinner with the Deputy Foreign Minister after his arrival on Sunday. The "spirit" of Alatas' meetings with the PM and with Than Shwe was very cordial, and Alatas was impressed that the SPDC Chairman conducted his entire meeting in English.

[1](#)5. (C) On the basis of Indonesia and Burma's "long-standing friendship, dating back to their struggles for independence," Alatas delivered a personal letter from Megawati to Senior General Than Shwe and an invitation to PM Khin Nyunt to attend the ASEAN Bali Conference in October (the PM apparently accepted the invitation). Prodjowarsito said that Megawati's letter to Than Shwe "did not mention ASSK." Alatas believes that the seven-point "Burma Roadmap to Democracy" will be implemented faithfully with the "participation of all parties," including the NLD and ethnic groups. Alatas did not pressure either the PM or Than Shwe on a timeframe for the implementation of the roadmap, but

believes that "it will be implemented faithfully." His meetings focused on "big picture issues" outlined in the roadmap and especially the prospect of transition to a market-oriented economy.

16. (C) Prodjowarsito said that President Megawati had no intention to pressure the GOB and "the special envoy had no intention to pressure for the release of ASSK." Although Alitas had planned to see ASSK, PM Khin Nyunt advised him that "her condition was good, but her doctor advised against visitors." In any case, Prodjowarsito said, seeing ASSK was not Alatas' priority. However, Alatas did tell PM Khin Nyunt that Indonesia did not want ASSK's continued detention to be "counterproductive," either to the ASEAN agenda in Bali or to overall progress on the SPDC's roadmap. Alatas did raise the "tragedy" of May 30 with the PM, who responded that ASSK's detention is temporary and that "she will be released from the guest house," but offered no timeframe.

17. (C) Ambassador Prodjowarsito emphasized that Indonesia does not want "extraneous issues" (referring to the detention of ASSK) to affect the Bali agenda, which will focus on more cooperative themes such as a "Bali declaration." He said that there is currently no specific agenda item dedicated to a Burma discussion, but explained that Burma issues can be raised under an agenda item titled "Current Developments."

And On To The Next Visitor

18. (C) Leon De Reidmatten told the group that U.N. Special Envoy Razali will arrive in Rangoon the morning of September 30 and depart on October 2. However, de Riedmatten did not indicate that the SPDC has confirmed a meeting with either ASSK or Than Shwe. De Riedmatten said this 11th visit will be different from previous visits, as Razali will have to evolve from "being a facilitator into being a negotiator." Razali will need to negotiate the composition of a reconvened National Convention, from which the regime has to date excluded the democratic opposition. De Riedmatten said that Razali will also need at least two meetings each with the PM, Than Shwe, and ASSK in order to "negotiate a compromise between the regime and the lady."

Comment: Off the Hook in Bali?

19. (C) We are not privy to the contents of the correspondence delivered by Alatas to the SPDC. However, his public diplomacy here in Rangoon was disappointing. He missed a rare opportunity to visit with ASSK, seek her views on the situation prior to the ASEAN summit, and offer her regional support in the aftermath of the SPDC's premeditated and violent attack of May 30. This "soft" approach may encourage the regime to not return ASSK to detention after her pending hospital discharge. However, it is likely that Alatas' "friendly" visit leaves the generals with the impression that they will not have to account for their many misdeeds when they meet with their regional counterparts in Bali. End comment.
Martinez